1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

spread and well known tribes of the Central Uplands extending from Kolhan in the district of Singhbhum and as far west as the Chitor Hills. Contact with them was from the earliest as shown by the name "Kolarian", still used by many in a generic sense for the languages and people of the Munda group. Dr. Griffiths' account of the Kols in a readable handy form is expected to remove much of this want. As a missionary of the Methodist Church, who spent many years in Jubbulpore, Dr. Griffiths had great opportunity of intimate acquaintance with the Kols of this part and his account, therefore, is based on deep personal knowledge. The Kols described by him, however, are greatly acculturated with Hindu ideas and beliefs and do not retain their original practices in the same form and extent as those living in the interior of Rewa. Nevertheless, Dr. Griffiths has succeeded in discovering traces of many interesting customs not hitherto described. Such for example is the practice of local or village exogamy (pp. 69-70) although clan-Kurhi (or Got from Sans Gotra) exogamy is no longer prevalent (p. 52). The author considers that totemism has lost its significance among the Kols (p. 54), but Russell and Hiralal mention (The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces, Vol. III, pp. 510-11) the names of several totemistic septs among the Mandla Kols, *e.g.*, the Bargaiyan Kols, the Kathotia, the Katharia, and the Kumhra, who show special reverence to the Banyan tree, the Tiger, the Mattress and the Gourd respectively. Other apparently totemistic septs are the Mudia or Mudrundia, the Bhuwar, Nathunia and the Karpatia. Some of them such as Kathautia and Kathariya, Kurha, Bhumiya, Mudia (Murha) find place in the list of 22 clans given by the author (pp. 32-33). The possibility of a totemistic basis of their social organization is strongly suspected, but may perhaps be investigated with greater chances of success among the wilder Kols of Kaimur Hills, and those living in the interior of the Rewa State. Another interesting feature noted by the author is the use of bangles, specially made from metals like copper and iron, as effective protection against evil spirits, and of beads as defensive ornaments against the evil eye in children (p. 180).

The book is illustrated with drawings and well chosen photographs taken by the author, but there are unfortunately several printing errors and certain inconsistencies in the writing of the names of works cited, *e.g.*, W. Crooke's work is cited as "The Tribes and Castes of the North Western Provinces and Oudh" on p. 4, but on p. 33, the same work is written as—"Tribes and Castes of *North-West* Provinces and Oudh." Similarly Dr. Verrier Elwin's "The Baiga" is written incorrectly as *The Baigas*.

These small blemishes, however, do not detract from the real

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342 823 [171] BUILDING CUSTOMS. Like their village neighbours about them, Kols have numerous superstitions relating to houses and certain customs in connection with their construction. In India, it has been said, "a house should face north or east and not south or west, as the south is the region of Yama, the God of Death, who lives in Ceylon, and the west is the quarter of the setting sun."[1] Kols are not quite [177] so particular in this respect although due to Hindu influences there is a general tendency to follow this plan. The Kols observe a general rule which is that if the house is to be longer than it is wide, the greatest length should be parallel to the north-south line.

When a new house is about to be built in a village, its actual position is generally determined in relation to the other houses about it. If the position of the house is not limited by other houses, and if there is doubt as to the location, a Hindu *pandit* is sometimes [177 called to help decide the exact place. The *pandit* consults 791] astrological factors as from these he is said to be able to determine whether the place is suitable or not, or if an evil spirit lives on that spot or nearby. If the report should be unfavourable, another spot is selected and the process repeated. When satisfactory, the *pandit* will also fix the day on which work should begin on the construction of the building. For this service he is paid two annas to a rupee according to the ability of the builder to pay.

342 If the house is not to be permanent little or no ceremony is observed in connection with its building, as it is considered a temporary structure which can be broken up in a few minutes.

If, however, the house is one with mud walls and is of a more permanent nature, there are certain customs which are quite generally observed. The foundation trench is first dug although this may be hardly more than a levelling of the ground on which the walls will [782] stand. A "foundation stone" is usually placed somewhere in the trench, and beneath it are put two pice, some rice coloured yellow with turmeric and an areca nut (*Areca catechu*). The walls are constructed of mud with a certain amount of cow dung and straw mixed in to insure its stability.

One of the pictures[2] shows a Kol house in the process of construction. This particular house was being built on the site of another house. In this case, which was observed for some time, the following customs were noted, and found also to apply to other [789] cases of building.

Just within the threshold of the single entrance to the house there

1 Russell and Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of Central Provinces*, Vol. III, p. 88.
2 See Plate VIII.

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is put a charm to protect it from the demons. In this case pieces of iron were found scattered about : bolts, nuts and scraps from the railway

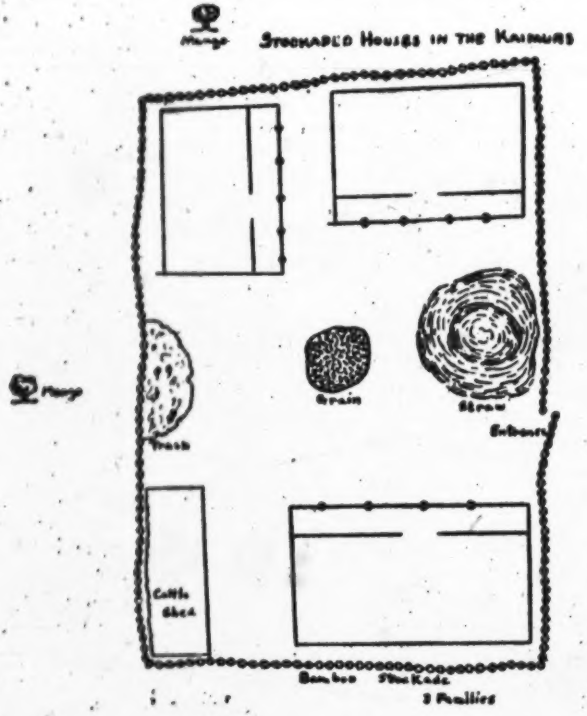

Fig. 4.

line. There were also rather large pieces of stone scattered here and there under what would be the floor of the house. If obtainable, the best kind of stone to use is said to be the *sil* or grindstone for preparing condiments. At least one should be under the floor of every house, and should be under the section where the cooking is to be done. The *sil* is a symbol of fertility as well as a protector. Another protective device is old leather, and in this case an old shoe was utilized. In the picture such a shoe can be seen to the right, placed on the end of a stick stuck into the wall. As the wall is made higher, this too is

1 Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

342 raised. An old shoe is also generally found along with the iron and
● 789 stones under the floor. Occasionally bits of dried *tulasi* plant (*Ocymum sanctum*) are also scattered about the floor or again a bunch of *tulasi*
[824] may be tied at the base of the central pole. This pole stuck in the centre of the house being built is not a part of the permanent construction, but is a device to render the building work satisfactory and protect the home from demons taking possession of it while in the process of construction. On the pole can be seen hanging a basket and in this basket were found pieces of iron and tin, and bits of the outer *lepoed*[1] covering of another house. It may be taken from the walls of a house in which a happily married and prosperous family lived.
[237] In an earthen pot placed on the floor there was a yellowish liquid. The builder told us that this was water, but it had the appearance of cow's
[778 urine, although this could not be confirmed. Occasionally there is a
782] sign of a little shrine about the construction somewhere, which shows signs of the presentation of the *hom* offering.

342 The inner floor of the house will be filled in and packed down after the walls are up. In dwellings of good construction the floor of the interior of the house should be higher than the veranda floor, and the veranda floor should, in turn, be higher than that of the courtyard. Kol houses have no windows, and the door-ways are low. On enter-
[782 ing one must bow, or even get down on hands and knees. Bowing as
788] one enters is said to be a method of showing respect to the household deities. Windows might let in evil forces, hence none is included.

342 Women may aid in building the house, but their work is limited
462 to assisting in building the walls and floor of the house by bringing the earth or water, mixing them and helping to place the mud in the proper place. They take no part, however, in the construction of the
[562 roof. This is not a woman's job, and for a woman to get upon a roof
784] is taboo—a thing that requires punishment or a fine.

342 Kols are able to construct the whole house. If the roof is to
[824] be of grass, the grass is brought from the forests, and *kusa* (*Poa cynosuroides*) and *duba* (*Agrestis linearis*) are generally used. If tiles are utilized, cheap country tiles are obtained from the village
[323] potter. The Kol puts the tiles on the roof himself. The only
[335] thing which he cannot make is the door and frame, but these may be bought quite cheaply in the markets or may be made for him by the village carpenter. They are set in the opening left for the door, and the mud is packed in about them. There is usually but one door to a house. The more primitive types of houses so common among

1 See Glossary, Appendix VI, for meanings of Vernacular terms.

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sometimes silver, or again may be of cheaper metals. These are allowed to rub one against the other and make a tinkling sound as they move. There are ten toe-rings, one for each toe. It is not to be thought that these things are all worn continually. A few are always worn, and when some opportunity arises to wear the others, they are put on.

A lac *tika* is stuck on the forehead of young married women. This is put on by the husband in order that all may see that she is married and also to protect both of them.

TATTOOING. Every woman should have tattoo marks (*godna*) upon her body. Men are not tattooed. The time for this varies. Among more Hinduized sections it is said that it should be done at puberty, that is, at the ages of ten to twelve. Again, and it seems to be the more common custom among the Kols, the *godna* is done shortly before the marriage. In certain cases which we came across, it was said to have been done after marriage. Kols do not do the tattooing themselves, but it is done by the regular tattooer called *bajigar* or *godnari*.

On the accompanying text figures tattoo designs copied from Kol women are shown. There is generally a purpose for each position. Design 1 is placed on various parts of the body. It is found over the right kidney region to take away pain. It is also put on the breasts to ensure a good supply of milk. On the palms of the hands it is believed to help in making *chapatis* light and palatable; on the arms it is supposed to benefit the husband, while on the face it is purely decorative.

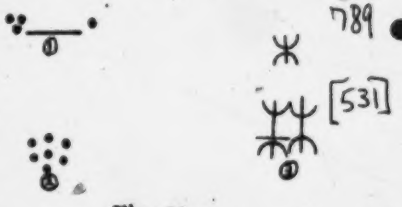

Fig. 12

Design 2 was found inside the left wrist.

Design 3 was on the right leg and takes away pain.

Design 4 was on the outside of the upper left arm. It was mainly decorative, but a protective significance was also suggested. It was said that in this case it took two hours to tattoo the design and that it was a very painful process. (See figure 13.)

Design 5 was found on the same woman on the outside of the left forearm. Another Kol woman had design 6 on the inside of the left forearm. This same woman had design 7 on the outside of the upper left arm. (See figures 14, 15, 16.)

There are certain traditions connected with tattooing. We were once told that when a Kolin is cremated Bhagawan catches the hand which has the *godna* and conducts her to *Baikuntha*. Therefore, it is

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

304 775 776 789 exceedingly important that the hands and the arms should be tattooed. In case the body is buried, the tattoos, as another group told us, save the body; for when *Baimata*, a female demon, comes to devour it she cannot eat any of the tattooed portions, and thus much more is left to go to Bhagawan.[1]

304 531 789

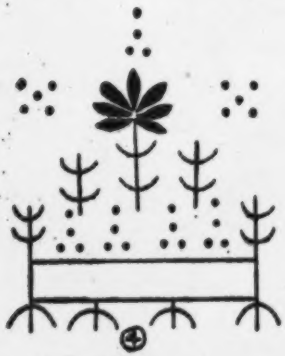

Fig. 13

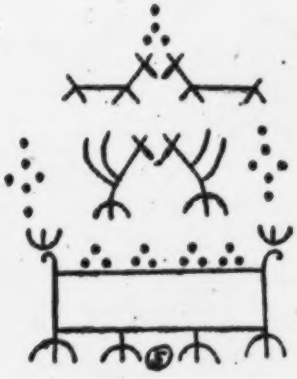

Fig. 14

304 789 Tattooing also wards off the evil eye, to which women, especially when with child, are very susceptible. As stated above, it has also a medical significance, in that it keeps the organs healthy and functioning properly. The tattooings about the ankle are a protection against snake bite.

000 The art of tattooing is probably of Polynesian origin and its widespread practice among Munda tribes may be due to their common racial affinities.

304 It was noted above that Kols say that *Bajigars* do their tattooing. *Bajigar* literally means a 'juggler', 'actor'. Russell and Hiralal know nothing of this group unless it be the same as *Bajgari*, a subcaste of *Gandas*. The latter are wandering musicians and are considered unclean. It is not unlikely that Kols make use of other groups for tattooing but the available information is not conclusive on this point. The [386] term *godnari* means simply "one who tattoos." The colours usually used are blue and black, and the operation is often a painful one. The

1 See Briggs, G. W., *The Chamars*, p. 145.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

843 782 presentation of a piece of a broken cocoanut. Occasionally, particularly when the woman is in severe pain before the time her birth-pangs are expected and normal, there may be a special sacrifice of one of the animals noted above. Hindus also observe similar ceremonies.

843 789 There are certain charms which are believed to be useful to the expectant mother to ward off evil. A small metal box for the protecting *devi* is worn on a cotton thread round the neck, while a copper necklace is regarded as an especially effective protection. Sometimes the leaves [824] of the *tulasi* plant (*Ocymum sanctum*) are useful. Such leaves may be laid on the mother's abdomen with a prayer that she may be safeguarded through this dangerous period. These various means help in the prevention of miscarriage which, if it does occur, is believed to be due to the influence of some evil force. But even should a demon trip the woman up and cause her to fall heavily to the ground, no harm will result if these precautions have been attended to. When there is a case of miscarriage the foetus is taken away to the burial ground and put into a hole without any ceremony.

845 789 *Labour.* Among the more primitive Kols difficult labour is ascribed to evil spirits; the more advanced ones speak of it as a punishment due from Bhagawan for some bad *karma*. In case the delivery proves difficult there are certain things that should be done. Some Kols definitely averred that nothing can alter the difficulties of labour, but questions have been answered in such a way by others that it appears to be established that there are magical practices in this connection. If things are not going well the first thing to be done is to make a suitable offering to a *devi* or *deva*, or both. Then one should go carefully about the house and open the mouth of each covered earthen pot; the knots on every bundle should be carefully untied and strings or pieces of ropes untwisted. As far as possible every closed thing in the house should be opened up. This, it is believed, will make the delivery easier. Often five handfuls of rice are taken out of the opened rice jar and Bhagawan is challenged to divide the grains into two equal parts without making an error. They imply that if he can do such a thing and do it right he will surely be able to see the child safely through delivery.

844 787 Another magical use of grain is also made at this critical hour. Prayers are first offered for a safe delivery, then a handful of grain is taken out of the pot by a male member of the family. This is carefully counted. If it happens that the number of grains is even, then all will be well, for it is a good omen, and the delivery will be easy. If the number is an odd one, it is a warning of the likelihood of pain and danger.

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Kols generally believe that the soul of the child enters and possesses its new body before the child is born. The more general opinion is that the movements of the child in the womb, which first occur about the sixth month, are the signs that the body has received its soul and is already a person. The soul is a gift to the child by Paramatma, and it enters the child's body through the mouth, nose or ears. The Kols' idea of the state and nature of the soul before entering the child's body is very vague and it is unusual to find any clear idea of transmigration and previous existence in another body. 843 774 [776]

Delivery. There is no uncleanness attached to the woman up to the time of the birth of her baby, but for six days thereafter she is considered unclean. The actual delivery of the child always occurs at home for no use is made of hospitals or the like. 844 [783]

When the time of birth is near the female relatives who have come for the occasion take charge of her. No male members of the family are allowed in the delivery room and men are kept out for the six days following. In a few places however we learned that they might enter after three days. Her mother-in-law and her sister are the ones to make the arrangements and do the actual work, although other female members of the two families may stand ready to assist. The woman awaits her time in a darkened room protected as far as possible from the entry of evil spirits. A few hours before (and sometimes just at the time) birth is expected a mid-wife—*dai*—is summoned. The Kols usually summon a Chamarin, or if she is not available, a Basorin. Sometimes, particularly around Jubbulpore, the Basorin seems to be preferred. If the birth should occur before the *dai* arrives the women in the house can do everything except the cutting of the umbilical cord. In one place we asked what would happen if the *dai* did not arrive and they replied that before a Kolin would cut the cord they would have to let the mother and baby die! Some Kols are said to do it themselves, but we did not find any who admitted that they do so. If the child should be born in a field the mother gathers up the child and the after-birth in her *sari* and carries it home and then the *dai* is called to cut the cord and care for the infant. [84] [776 789]

The birth usually occurs with the mother squatted on the floor, seated on her heels and bending over a large basket placed upside down on the floor, her head meanwhile resting on her hands. The female relatives support her and give encouragement. The *dai* is the one to receive the child. No one in the family should touch the child until it has first been purified by the *dai*. This applies to the mother as well. The *dai* cuts the umbilical cord with an iron instrument which [783] [412]

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cord the child will die if this is eaten; if it is buried deeply the child's teeth will appear late and if shallow they come early.[1]

No traces of corresponding beliefs were found among the Kols, but they have the conviction, common to village India, that, should wrong persons get possession of the placenta and the umbilical cord they are likely to be used in magical practices dangerous to the mother and the infant. They should therefore be well-guarded and no outsider should have access to them; this is why they usually are not taken out of the house and are buried beneath the floor. A childless woman, by eating a portion of either the placenta or the umbilical cord may dispel the influences which keep her barren, but in so doing there is every chance that it will result in injury and even death in the family from which she received by stealth the required parts.

The work of the *dai* ordinarily lasts for six days, that is, during the full period of the uncleanness. Sometimes however, this is dispensed with as far as the full period is concerned, but during the time the *dai* is in the house it is her duty to care for the mother and child. For the first three days the mother is not supposed to take anything except a little milk but after that period is over she eats a bit of food after the first bath. If the child is a male the *dai* is usually paid one rupee for her work, and if the child be of the other sex, half that amount. During the period of her work the *dai* is given food from the household and when she leaves certain other presents and clothes are likely to be forthcoming. No difference in the period of uncleanness is made on account of sex—in either case it lasts for six days. In some places there is a relaxation of the strictness after the third day. A special drink said to be made of "ginger root (*Cleome viscosa*), raw sugar (*gur*) and certain jungle roots boiled together" is given to her three times a day until she is stronger.

During this period the mother is confined to her room. She should not touch anything and should spend the time lying down. Certain measures should now be taken to protect the mother and the young child from evil influences. These influences are particularly malignant during the first six days, but may be overcome by certain methods. A small fire should constantly burn in the lying-in room and should be kept alive by wood from the *bel* tree (*Aegle marmelos*). *Bel* is the wood of the gods and they are attracted by its smoke and no evil spirits dare be present at the same time. Sometimes twigs of *bel* wood are placed beside the infant or a twig of the same may be imbedded in the floor. The wood of the *nim* tree (*Melia azadirachta*)

1 *The Birhors*, p. 223.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

is also a valuable charm against evil spirits and is often used. Ashes from the fire burning within the room are also taken and sprinkled around the cot or around the spot where the newborn infant is lying on the floor. No spirit will dare cross this line of ashes. Ashes are also placed on the door sill to bar access to the house from that direction. Iron is similarly used; bits of nails being driven into the frame about the door, or a piece of iron hung just over it. Sometimes wine may be sprinkled around the delivery room after the *dai* has cleaned up. This attracts the beneficent deities and as a result the evil ones will have to flee. During those six critical nights an elderly man should sleep just outside the doorway. Every form of protection known should be attempted, for there is no telling where *bhuts* may enter as they can come into the house as air does.

There is a night bird belonging to a class of owls which the Kols greatly fear. This is the night-jar (*Caprimulgus asiaticus*), called by them the *kurset* bird and often known as the goatsucker. As it is particularly fond of human milk this bird is said to watch for the women nursing babies. During the night, when the mother and child are sound asleep, this bird is very active and may slip into the house and draw the milk from the mother's breast. The mother is not aware of this, or if she is dimly conscious of something, she believes that the baby is feeding. For lack of milk the child does not grow, gets thinner and thinner and soon dies. Its constant crying is a sure sign that the *kurset* bird is stealing away its milk. The mother is also affected and may die. The best possible protection against this bird is the closed door (there being no windows), with branches of the *nim* tree hanging over it. He may also be frightened away by ill-sounding noises. These birds, commonly seen in Central India, have a peculiar way of looking at one, as if they were staring and searching for something.

The stump of the umbilical cord, called the *nara*, has usually fallen off by the sixth day and this is invariably buried in the floor of the house, and fire kept burning over the place of its burial for six days more. Several things are buried with the cord, although reports vary. Occasionally some *bel* leaves are put with it and it is thus interred; again a few copper pice, some turmeric (*haldi*—*Curcuma longa*) and *supari* nut (*Areca catechu*) are also buried with it. At other times some grains of rice may be coloured yellow with *haldi* and then dropped one by one into the hole prepared for the cord. As each grain is dropped the name of some relative is called. In the future the child should hold these names in great respect and never call such persons directly by name. This dropping of rice, however, is not usually observed. The burial of the *nara* or cord is said to be very important. It is really a

l;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

part of one, and if another person should get it he would have power over the child. Its burial is also, strangely, a proof of birth. If a Kol is asked where he was born he replies : "My *nara* is buried in...." and names the village. In a real sense a part of him is buried there and he is a part of that village. The spot is plastered over with a mixture of cow dung, earth and water, and the fire lit over it. The *hom* sacrifice may also be offered. 846 [237] 782

Any extraordinary happening at birth or anything unusual is generally considered a bad sign. For example, a child born with teeth already in its mouth is much feared, for it signifies bad luck and a member of the family, probably one of the parents, will be sure to die within a short time. They say the child has come to destroy a member of the family. An extra finger, though, is considered as a good omen. Twins seem to have no special significance attached to them and their occurrence appears to be infrequent among the Kols. 845 787

The Sixth Day Ceremony : *Chhatthi*. After six days it is believed that the greatest period of danger is over and the woman can begin to make preparations to take up her normal life. This period corresponds with the time of greatest physical danger, for by the sixth day after birth, the dreaded septicaemia, if it is to come, will make its appearance. When day has come and all is well the *dhobi* and the *nai* are usually sent for. The former takes all the soiled clothes. The wife, after a preliminary bath and anointing by the *dai*, puts on fresh clothes. The barber trims the nails of her hands and feet and puts vermilion on both her feet and the feet of her child so that no evil spirit may harm them as they make their way to the place of the ceremonial bath. Her head has been oiled with *til* oil and occasionally the child has been pricked on the stomach with a hot iron, so that "the waters may be digested". All the earthen vessels in the house should be thrown out and new ones purchased from the Kumhar, and the house should be cleaned and plastered. The *nai* also gives the male members of the family a good shave, both of the face and the head. 846 [164] [309] [415] [302]

The mother is now ready for the ceremonial bath at the village bathing place. The women of the household go there in a group accompanied by a Basor beating a drum. This is done just at sundown. The mother carries a brass vessel (*lota*) on the top of which burns an earthenware lamp (*diya*). At the place of bathing offerings are made : cocoanut, *haldi*, *supari*. Incense may be sprinkled in the fire in the lamp. Mustard seed (*rai*) is often scattered about in order to frighten off any evil spirits which may be at the place ready to injure the mother and the child. There is then a formal sort of bath, the water being [354 415] [782] [789]

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

857
853 the child is fed and the money is used to buy an ornament. When
862 groups using the finger were asked about using the coin, they said that
574 it should not be done as the coin was not clean. Another group used a mango leaf instead of the finger. In Rewa State one group stated that just before the feeding of the child the mother should take it before the household deity, naming Bhanmati in this case, and bowing down before her ask the *devi* to protect the child, the household, and the children yet to come.

304 NOSE AND EAR PIERCING. The piercing of the nose and ears is
[326] usually done by a *sonar* (goldsmith), although Kols may do it themselves. The hole is generally made by simply forcing the ends of the ring through the lobe in the ear, but for the nose a bronze instrument is used. As far as could be ascertained no ceremony is performed at the time nor does the *sonar* repeat any *mantras*. The best time to have piercing done is at the time of some large *mela* (religious gathering) in the vicinity, for then there are plenty of *sonars* on hand awaiting work. [757] When the nose is pierced a small plug of wood is first inserted, but the earrings are allowed from the beginning. The wound has onion and [465] turmeric rubbed into it, which help it to heal. The *sonar* is given a seer of rice, some chillis and a little salt, or may be paid four pice for the piercing and paid extra for the rings according to their value. It has already been noted that the Kathautiyas use woodpith to enlarge the holes in their ears and as a result their lobes have larger holes. [301] Kols about Jubbulpore claimed that in Rewa every Kol woman should have a ring of gold and silver on her ears or nose. Our observations however did not confirm this claim.

789 Earrings help to protect the child from evil. Other things as well
[301] ward off evil influences and we found that the *retha* nut (*Sapindus*
824 *mukorossi*) and half a *ghata* nut (*Ziziphyus xylopyrus* (?)) are put into a strip of cloth, tied in a knot and worn round the neck. This is considered a good protection from *nazar*, the evil eye, but it does not help in the case of *bhuts*. Black bangles on the wrists and a white *pot* (dab) [776] just in front of the ears also protect from the evil eye. A copper ring may be put on one of the ankles for any evil spirit attacking the child will become imprisoned in this. Good spirits live in amulets about the neck and drive off *bhuts*. At other times a piece of a broken or [826] discarded human tooth, tied on a string about the wrist, is considered an effective protection. A strip of coloured cloth, red and yellow being preferred, may also be tied somewhere about the child's person. These are some of the measures which may be taken to protect the young child during the early months and years of life. Other instances

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

of charms used are discussed in the chapter on Magic and Witchcraft.

PUBERTY. From the above mentioned ceremonies until the Kol child reaches puberty, there is little of importance to note. When the first milk tooth falls out the child is told to take it outside near the house, to shut his eyes and to throw it on the roof, never looking to see where it has gone. This will aid in the coming in of the new tooth.

The girl is tattooed when between the ages of ten and twelve and just before her marriage may be given further tattooing. In the Kaimur hills it was said that a woman must be tattooed, for without it Bhagawan would not know how to grasp her and take her spirit on its way to the heavens. No ceremonies occur at the time of tattooing, and apart from saying that it is the custom Kols could give us almost no information on the matter. The designs are usually similar to those of their Hindu neighbours and the actual tattooing is done by the same man who does it for other castes. See the description on pages 28-31.

No particular rites are observed in connection with the girl's first menstruation. At such a time she is asked to stay in the house and if there is a second room into which she can go she retires there. She is not put out into a menstruation hut as is common among some Munda tribes. During the four to six days that the menses last she is considered unclean and should not cook, bring water for the family, nor touch men's clothes. When the menses have ceased she has to go to the village shrine and offer a cocoanut.

Nowhere among the Kols were we able to find any definite trace of puberty rites which are common elsewhere. We were told that a boy of the Kol tribe could only be considered a Kol when he reached the age of twelve to thirteen. In the full sense he becomes of age when he is sixteen. A girl is considered to be of age when she goes to live for good in the house of her husband. No traces were discovered of any ordeal that either sex had to undergo; no scars are made on the body nor were any hair tying ceremonies observed among the groups studied.

Bachelors' Quarters. No trace was found of bachelors' quarters nor of segregated dormitories for boys and girls, which are well-known among the Mundas and allied tribes of Chota Nagpur. The Gonds of Bastar and elsewhere also have them. They have been considered as a place for sex instruction but the system has been widely criticised by the more advanced Mundas and is being abandoned in many places. Other writers have attributed no social or religious importance to these quarters. One writes: "The thing is that the poor people in a village cannot afford to build big houses for themselves containing

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584 (a) *Negotiations.* If the girl's father, after enquiries, is fully satisfied the matter becomes one of real concern. The boy's father is informed of this and a day is set for him and his party of men (the boy and the women do not go and have no formal part) to go to the girl's house and start actual negotiations for the wedding since the matter is now no longer a secret. On the way to the girl's house this party 584 must be sure to take note of good or bad omens. If the latter are 787 frequent they may turn back and decide on a new start at a later hour or even on another day, if the omens have been particularly bad. To pass four people seated together is a good omen and to meet a Hindu *pandit* is another. But to meet a person with an empty vessel is a bad omen, as is also a meeting with a *teli* (oilman). A jackal about [825] to cross the road is a dangerous omen and one should make every attempt to head him off and to stop him from actually crossing the road. If it should occur, the best thing to do under the circumstances is to take a thorny branch, place it in the centre of the road at the point where the jackal crossed, put a heavy stone on top of the branch, and [789] with one foot planted on this stone roundly curse the beast. This will ward off the evil and save the person concerned from disaster.

It was noted that the groom-to-be does not accompany this party 584 nor does any female member of his family go to see the girl. The 574 party of men must take with them certain things, among them *dahi* (curds) kept in a new *markî* (earthenware vessel) which has been nicely whitewashed on the outside and has yellow symbols superimposed. The top is sealed with leaves and securely tied for it is eventually to be presented to the girl's father. They should also take *haldi* (turmeric, *Curcuma longa*) and *sendur* (vermilion). When the party arrives at the girl's village they are warmly greeted and brought to the house where the matter is formally discussed and much of the ground previously gone over privately is now publicly repeated. After a formal agreement has been reached by both parties the girl's father should ceremonially wash the feet of the boy's father, but another may do this if the father is unable to do so or is dead. This is a witness to 584 the fact that the matter is now settled and that the match is arranged. 583 The boy's father should at this time make payment of the first instalment of the price agreed upon in their discussions. The figure differs according to locality and is not uniform. It is divided into two parts, the first is paid on this visit and the balance just before the *sadi*. The following figures are typical, the first figure being the first payment: Rs. 8 and 4; 10-8-0 and 5-4-0; 9 and 4-8-0. The larger amount is paid first and half of it later. At Benda village it was claimed that there was no bargaining and that the price was fixed at

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585 couple.' The bridegroom soon arrives dressed in his wedding garments, being brought thence in the *palki*. In the *palki* there is some *sendur* and a pair of shoes which are for the bride, and which his father removes and gives to the girl's representative for use later on. The *sendur* is used during the ceremony to mark her forehead. The bridegroom is now helped out of his *palki* and is asked by the priest to [782] worship certain deities and as he does so he gives each a small offering of money.

The bride now makes her appearance for the first time; up till now she has been secluded in the house and none of the male members of either party has seen her. So now the bridegroom sees her for the first time, but only her form, as her face is covered with a part of her *sari*. She sits beside her future husband on the *chauk* and the priest repeats some Sanskrit formulas, but what they were we were unable to ascertain.

The time is now ready for the offerings to be presented to the persons about to be married. (At one place this was said to come later). This is called *chari* and comes from the groom's side. As they [431] come forward with their gifts they first touch the feet of those about to be married and then cast their gifts into the *kalsa* in the centre of the *chauk*. The usual gifts are money, clothes and brass vessels, and as far as possible these are thrown into the *kalsa*. But if one wishes to give a chicken, a goat, or even a cow he says, "I give a chicken" and makes a motion as if he were throwing it into the waiting vessel. This gift will be given later on. In reality this is a worshipping of the couple. If the girl has a brother he now appears with a small *lota* of water and a *thali* (tray). The girl is asked to stretch out her hands before her, the tray is placed beneath them and the water poured over her hands and into it.

The *lawa* is now served. It will be recalled that this was prepared at both houses after the *mangarmali* ceremony and the two portions are now brought and mixed together. Some *batasas* (small sugar-like wafers) are also added, the whole being mixed by the girl's brother. When he is satisfied that this has been well done he takes out seven handfuls, one at a time, which he places one by one into the washed hands of his sister which are still stretched before her. She receives each handful and places it on another *thali* set before her. This is called the *lawa parsana* (or *parosna*), and the bridegroom's party pays the boy four annas for it. The mixture, now called *bran*, is placed near the *magrohan* in the centre of the wedding booth. Some incense is put into the fire burning there and some of the *bran* is used to make a magic [789] circle about it.

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764 the body or the grave. After that he should not look back but go straight on towards the village.

Before the mourners depart there are certain other things that should be done. The two pice previously mentioned should be laid at the northern end of the grave. These the Basor or some other low caste Hindu present will remove shortly afterwards. Some salt and [789] some mustard seeds are also scattered over the grave. Salt is generally regarded as a protective and devil-scarer, while the mustard protects 263] from evil spirits who are kept so busy picking up the tiny seeds that they have no time to think of evil. Sometimes a little milk and some millet seed are also scattered over the grave. Milk is an offering to Mother Earth.

[372] It is not unusual to keep a fire burning over the place where the head is resting, though this is not the general custom. Such a fire should burn at least two days. This is managed by starting a fire and placing upon it two logs which keep on burning slowly for the next few days. Ordinarily the Kol puts no definite marker on the grave. The stones laid on top help to keep him from digging a new grave where an old was dug; yet it has been reported that in digging a new grave they have often come upon bones. Such a place is covered up and a new start made.

CREMATION. It was noted previously that the question whether a body should be burned or buried is, according to Kols, largely an [435] economic one. Under modern conditions, especially near cities, where wood is scarce and expensive a cremation costs at least Rs. 5 and can hardly be afforded. Even then cremation is considered the most satisfactory method as it gives a greater freedom to the spirit. As [775] long as the skeleton remains undecomposed in the grave, the spirit, if reborn into this world, will have to take some form like his previous one. If, however, the body is burnt and the bones largely consumed, the spirit is free to be reborn into anything else. There are other considerations in the mind of the Kol: children and unmarried young [766] folk should always be buried, as should people dying from diseases such as leprosy, plague and smallpox. One dying of smallpox should on no condition be burned.

If the method of cremation is decided upon, the making ready of the body for this type of disposal is essentially the same as described above in the preparation for burial. Upon arrival at the *ghat*, the funeral pyre, rather than the grave, is prepared. In most cases the wood is purchased, although it is the custom for friends and relatives to bring bits of wood. Cow dung cakes may also be added. Ordinarily

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764 the house, and preferably they should not be brought into the village, but this is not avoidable in all cases. It is usually the custom to hang the *ghara* in a tree at some distance from the house and village, although at times the *ghara* is buried after being sealed and the place above it is marked for later exhumation.

[798 It is preferable that the bones be taken direct from the burning *ghat* to the place of disposal, a sacred river being the most suitable place. 823] The Ganges and the Nerbudda are the best for this purpose; but if there is no immediate hope of being able to go to one of these all the bones and ashes except a mere fraction are thrown into a tank or a stream nearby and the residue is kept for a future trip to one of them. It may be two or three years before this can be done, and if a relative cannot take it a friend may do so.

After the ashes have been collected the place where the body was burned must be treated. It is first plastered, this being done by the women of the house, though the chief mourner may begin it. Over the plastered portion is now scattered the following, or some of the following: rice, rock salt, mustard seed, millet seed, and a little milk. [775 A two-pice piece (*takka*) should also be deposited. These things have 789] a dual purpose: they serve the spirit of the departed and also protect it from the encroachment of evil spirits. The growth of the mustard plant, should it sprout, is said to be something in memory of the departed. Sometimes a little sugar "for the ants" is also scattered over the plastered place.

764 *Throwing the Ashes in the River.* We were told at a centre about 177 ten miles from the Nerbudda river, how the ashes should be dealt with 793 if taken to the river. In this place following the more Hinduized types of behaviour, they make use of a Brahmin priest. He performs a ceremony which is called *sirana*, meaning the "head side"; probably signifying the resting place of the head. The ashes are brought to him in the bag or *ghara* and he reads some sacred words from his books and makes a prayer to Yama, the god of death, to accept the spirit of the deceased. This is followed by a prayer addressed to the sacred river, Nerbudda *Mai*. She is implored to accept the ashes and to give peace to the departed spirit. The ashes are then cast into the river. The Brahmin receives a fee in cash or offerings.

764 778 Further north the Kols look to the Ganges as the river into which the ashes should go if that is possible. The Kols in the south insist that the Nerbudda is just as sacred and as good as the Ganges. One man claimed that occasionally the ashes are divided, half being taken to the Nerbudda and the other half to the Ganges. The place where

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764
762 cannot get such faithful wives—they prefer to run away," and there
522 was a hearty laugh.

766 In some parts of India the bodies of young children are sometimes buried under the floor of the house in which they lived but this custom does not prevail among the Kols. Children are buried in the regular *masan*, and not in a special place by themselves. If both mother and child die at the time of childbirth they are buried together in one grave. If they die on different days so that they cannot be buried together they are given separate burials.

Those dying abnormal deaths, by suicide, accident, or childbirth, are not treated differently from those dying in other ways. Kols are unlike most Hindus in this respect.

764 Sometimes grass plays a part in the funeral ceremonies, and in
765 Rewa State we found that Kols used *urai* grass (*Vetiveria zizanioides*)
824 at such a time. It was stated that at the time of bathing after the return
184 from the funeral ground a bunch of *urai* grass should be held in the right hand and that it too should be bathed. At least the chief mourner should do this. During the following days and until the time of the funeral feast this same bunch of grass should be carefully washed every day. On the day of the funeral feast it is thrown into the tank or river.

764 An interesting explanation of the use of small plugs if gold put into
823 holes bored in the front teeth came from the Rewa State. It was said
301 that when one died and the body was cremated the teeth would not be
184 consumed by the fire and the gold would still be in them Or even if the gold had melted out it would be in the ashes, and would be gathered with them and taken to the river. The throwing of gold into a
[782 river, particularly the Ganges, is a gift to the gods and pleases them
715] and the spirit gets *aram*—rest—in the after life in *baikuntha*—the abode of *Vishnu*.

764 Tattoo marks are said to have a certain significance at the time
304 of death. This applies to women as the men are not tattooed. If a
789 woman has tattoo marks on her forearm, and also on her upper arm, the arms are so folded when she is placed in the grave that the two tattooed places touch each other. This is said to somehow afford protection, please the gods and help the spirit on its way.[1] See also pages 29 and 30.

764 The chief mourner should also keep a piece of iron about his person
823 during the days of mourning, and possibly ever after. Sometimes, just before burial, this piece which is to act as a charm, is touched to the

1 See Crooke, *Op. Cit.*, p. 296.

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the point of an iron trident through the cheek or tongue or part of the skin of the neck, and ask the "candidate" to jump and run about with it in place. This is the final test, as it were, of the validity of the claim to be a Kol priest. Further on is a fuller description of the phenomenon of the *bava*.[1]

Duties of the Priest. The duties of the priest are largely connected with the village shrine. He should keep it in order, offer the cocoanuts and animals, and perform the *hom* sacrifice. He is also the mouthpiece of the goddess. When possessed of the *devi* he is asked questions, and the answers that come from his mouth are not his, but are claimed to be the answers of the *devi* herself.

It is not infrequent that the *panda* is also expected to perform certain magical practices, although he is not as expert in these as the Baiga priest is believed to be. These practices are usually in connection with disease, but it may be any form of divination known to Kols. A child is ill, and the priest is asked for his help in healing the disease. The priest will go before the *devi* and vow to take no food for nine days, and after that to make a *jawara* offering. An earthen *ghara*, wheat and milk are given him. These he takes to the child's house and plants the wheat in the *ghara*. Sometimes this is done in his own house. The wheat is sprinkled daily with water and a little milk. It sprouts and grows, and in nine days, after being taken with ceremony to the village tank or a near-by stream, the earth is washed away. The wheat plants and the roots are then brought back to the house where the child is ill. If by this time the spirit causing the illness has not been satisfied, the wheat stalks and roots will surely satisfy her if left on the roof to dry. Like the stalks, the disease will dry up and disappear.

THE VILLAGE SHRINE. It was noted that each village has its central shrine. This, however, is not the only shrine in the village; there may also be other ones, but there is one which is recognized as the chief place of worship, and it is about this central shrine that the chief religious observances centre. The place of worship is a sanctuary of a god or goddess and not the place of public congregational worship. The pictures on plate xxiv show village shrines, and a ground plan in figure 26 is also given to show the disposition and arrangement of the various concomitants. Some shrines have more in them than others, and frequently a red *sendur* mark and cocoanut shells and ashes are the only sign that worship is carried on there. Hindu influences may be presumed.

1 See p. 150.

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778 411 [785 787] are very common. The trident with the sharp point is used at the time the *panda* or another is possessed of Khermai, and is pierced through the tongue or cheek.

3. *Spiked Sandals* (*Kharau*). Every well-equipped shrine should 778 787 292 have at least one pair of spiked sandals. These are made of pieces of wood in the shape of the sole of a shoe with sharp spikes driven through so that the person walking on them stands on the points. There is a wooden peg toward the front of each which fits between the big toe and the next and holds the sandal on the foot. These are generally used at the time of the trance. When the spirit of Kalimai possesses a man, it will be evidenced by his desire to put on these sandals and jump about in them.

4. *Iron Tongs* (*Chimta*). There is also another kind of iron 778 785 787 [412] instrument found in these shrines: iron tongs used for taking coals out of the fire. When Sannyasi *deo* comes upon a man he will take the tongs and beat himself with them. Hindu ascetics usually carry tongs.

5. *Iron Lash* (*Gurda*). This is a sort of magic chain made of iron links barbed with bits of steel. The handle by which it is grasped is also iron. During the *bawa*, if one is possessed (particularly by Bhuiyan *deo*), he will pick up this chain and lash himself till the blood comes. If some person, possessed of an evil spirit, is brought before the shrine, and the *panda* in his trance recognizes the reality of the spirit possession, he will attempt to cast out the spirit by lashing the unfortunate man.

6. *Iron Nails*. Some bits of iron or iron nails are usually found somewhere about the shrine. These serve a dual purpose: they are tests for Khermai, and one possessed of her can stick them into his flesh without pain or discomfort. They are also used to frighten away evil spirits who may make a disturbance, and are sometimes flung in their direction causing them to fly away.

7. *A Bed of Spikes* (*Palna*). Often a bed of spikes is found in connection with these shrines. This too is to test spirit possession. 778 One possessed of Kali will seek to use the bed of spikes.

8. *A Ram's Horn* is sometimes found. It is lucky to have one [777 237] and it protects the shrine.

9. *Clay Lamps* (*Dip*). Clay dishes into which oil is poured and [354] wicks attached are also found at all shrines. Sweet oil and incense are mixed, and during the time of worship two or three of these are lighted and kept burning. The *panda* lights and cares for them.

10. *Ashes* (*Rakha*). A pile of ashes is always found somewhere [789] about the shrine. This is a good protective device against evil spirits.

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If, during a worship period, a *bava* does not come when it should be expected, ashes are sprinkled over the worshipper. Probably some demon is near, and the spirit of the *devi* will not enter as long as a *bhut* is about, and this will frighten him away. A person who is ill, or who is facing some danger, may come, make an offering, and sprinkle ashes over himself, saying the magical words *"ochha, ochha."*

11. *A Grass Bundle* (*Chhahur*). This is the magic grass, and provides shade, shelter, and protection to *devis*. The *chhahur* is composed of stalks of wheat or some other sacred grass like *kans* (*Saccharum spontaneum*), *kusa* (*Poa cynosuroides*) or *urai* (*Vetivera zizanoides*) tied in a bundle to the end of a bamboo stick. These bits of grass are taken from thatch roofs of the houses in the village, usually one stalk from each house. Thus each house honours the deity and will therefore be protected. At times of smallpox or cholera this is a very effective procedure, and one or two stalks are brought from each house and tied together by the *panda* and set up. Each family which gives the grass is thus protected. Strings of red, yellow and black beads are usually hung about the *chhahur*. They give the household added protection as the *devis* are still more pleased.

12. *Flowers*. Marigold (*Tagetes erecta*), and *Tulasi* (*Ocymum sanctum*) plants are nearly always seen in connection with Kol shrines. The marigold is a sacred plant and is usually found in connection with Hindu worship, while *tulasi* plants are often found there too. At Kaimur, Kali lived in a *tulasi* plant and black bangles were hung upon it to indicate that fact.

13. *Bangles* (*Churi*). Bangles, being a feminine adornment, are always found at Kol shrines. These are usually red, yellow or black in colour, and they seem to be used with discrimination. They may be tied on a pole or on a *nim* tree, or fastened to some part of the furnishings of the shrine.

14. *Vermilion* (*Sendur*). Red lead is very necessary in worship. It was seen how it stimulated Mahabir into action. *Devis* like it, and it is also a devil scarer and helps to protect the shrine.

15. *Mounds* (*Pinda*). It is not infrequently found that there are one or more mounds raised on the mud platform to represent *devis* and to be their dwelling place. These are generally whitewashed once a week. At Kaimur, one was for Khermai and the other for Mari *devi*; at Benda Bhainsokhar was worshipped this way.

16. *Earthenware Vessels* (*Ghara*). These are not always found, but during the hot season are usually hung either in the tree or on a pole over the shrine. Sometimes liquor is kept in them. This is pleasing to the goddesses, especially Kali. Sometimes water is kept

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778 [271 776] in these vessels, and a tiny hole pierced in the bottom so that the water drops over the shrine. This is popular in warm weather when the *devi* should be cooled and the dripping water is pleasing to her.

17. *Tinsel* (*Tika*): Women often place a small round dot made [302] of lac tinsel on the centre of their foreheads. It is usually of red colour. These bits of tinsel are used in the shrines as well, and are stuck on it here and there. The *devis* like them and they help to attract them to the shrine.

18. *Stone* (*Patthar*). Bits of stone, usually pieces rounded in the bed of streams and longish in shape, are often found somewhere about the shrine. This may be an imitation of the *Salagrama* stones found [331] in connection with the worship of Vishnu. Sometimes they are of *lingam* type such as used in the worship of Siva.

This sums up the items usually found in Kol shrines. Probably no shrine we saw had all these components, though the Kalmur shrine came nearest to it. In addition to the above, there was at Kaimur [823] an unusual feature. This was a flat stone which had apparently come from some ancient Hindu temple and on which two figures were carved. The *panda* of the shrine claimed that it was brought from Rewa and [782 that the figures represented Sharda and Kalki. The stone must have 789] weighed about eighty pounds, but, it was claimed, if a *hom* offering were performed when it was moved, it became very light and was [380] easy to transport. It was coloured red with *sendur*. It will have been noticed how imperfectly anthropomorphized the godlings are, and that no special images are required.

The only Kol shrine which had brick walls and a roof was found on the outskirts of Katni. The room measured about five feet square inside, was four feet high, and had a flat roof. This was called the shrine of Khermai, although on the flat top Bannai was said to dwell. [824] Also tongs were there for Sannyasi *deo*. The usual bundle of *kans* grass (*Saccharum spontaneum*) was on top of it.

778 793 The offerings, the lighting of the lights and the placing of the necessary parts, are all in the hands of the *panda*. It is not part of his work, however, to keep the shrine clean and properly plastered. This is the duty of the women of the village, and they take turns in doing it. The shrine is plastered at least once a week and cleaned oftener. The sweepings, including ashes, dust, bits of cocoanut shells and the like, are not swept to the ground beside the shrine, but are carefully put into a basket by the woman who is doing the work. If they should be thrown out upon the earth, evil will result, so they are carried to a stream or a tank and thrown into the water. They are sacred ashes, likened unto the ashes following a cremation and must be respected.

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orthodox Hindus each passage of the sun from one constellation to another is marked by some kind of ceremony. The change after the sun has reached its most northern course coincides with the coming of the welcome monsoon rains, which turn the dry and dusty lands into a paradise of green. Russell and Hiralal also note that the Kurmis, an agricultural caste in the Central Provinces, keep this festival in the month of *Srawan* (July-August).[1]

Hariyari. This has been named to us by Kols and is probably very similar to, if not identical with, the *Hareli* festival. Crooke has a few words by way of information: "Bhuiyas, Kols, and Binds of the United Provinces also worship during the rainy season Haryari Devi, 'Mother of Greenery', by employing their Baiga priest to sacrifice chickens and to pour a libation of wine on the field after harvest or before the sowing season."[2]

Holi. This festival is usually called *Phag* by Kols as it occurs in the month of *Phagun* (February-March). It is essentially a spring festival, largely entered into and carried on by the lower castes. It marks the coming of spring, and the sympathetic magic in the ceremony tends to promote the fertility of crops and animals.

Kols who live in or near cities and towns observe this more than those isolated in villages. In Rewa a group of Kols claimed that they would not particularly observe it, but Kols near Jubbulpore said that those who remained behind in Rewa observed it much more fully than they who had left and come away.

Preparations for the *Phag* festival were watched in a Kol village close to Jubbulpore, and our enquiries were freely answered. The first part of the festival centres around a great bonfire which is arranged much as Hindu castes construct it. This should always be built outside the village and eastwards, towards the rising sun. If one Kol village cannot get up enough enthusiasm for a good celebration, they may join with another village in their preparations, or several villages may join together. The wood for the fire may be taken by force or stolen from its owners, and the owners are not supposed to make any protest.

The place chosen for the fire is first cleared and levelled. In the centre a hole is dug, into which the pole, around which the wood is to be stacked, will be inserted. Two pice, some *haldi* and a *supari* nut are dropped into the hole. The central pole should be of *andi* wood, the castor oil stalk (*Palma christi*), and around this the wood, brush and other inflammable materials are laid. The larger the pile the more

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Tribes and Castes*, Vol. IV. p. 84.
2 Crooke, W., *Op. Cit.*, p. 265.

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796 787 The ninth day is the final day of the *Jawara* festival. The greenish-yellowish wheat can now be brought out and something foretold, in the case of the Fall festival, about the coming crop. If the wheat has grown nicely, in spite of the fact that it has been kept indoors, and in addition frequently covered by a basket, it is a sign that there will be a good crop of wheat. If the growth of the *jawara* is poor, the crop will likely be a poor one. The process appears to [789] have an element of magic in it and is used as a method to secure good crops; for the earth is first well manured and then well cared for and watered. Frazer in his series, "The Golden Bough", has found a similar ritual elsewhere which he calls "The Garden of Adonis."[1]

The growing wheat cannot be taken out before the late afternoon. When the time comes to take it out, some animals are sacrificed at the village shrine, there is singing and dancing and probably there will [782] be a *bawa* with Shardamai as the deity possessing the devotee. The procession is formed at the shrine, and the women carry the plants on their heads to the river or tank where the stalks are immersed. [789] The men folk follow a short distance behind and loudly beat their drums to frighten away any evil influences. The women sing songs [533] of the *bhugat* type and there may be some *bawas* as well, and the de- [785] votee has a trident stuck into his tongue or cheek. Upon reaching the place where the wheat will be "cooled", the women enter the water, and wash away the earth from the roots of the plants. The earthenware vessels are thrown away, and the stalks are retained. Most of [43] them, though not all, are brought back and distributed to friends as [62] a mark of goodwill. They receive from others as well as give. All enmities should be healed.

796 574 That evening there is a feast at the village shrine. The Kols gather by *kurhis* and the animals sacrificed are eaten along with other foods; there is more music and songs and perhaps some more *bawas*. Sometimes the animals are not sacrificed until the procession bringing the stalks of wheat, returns from the tank.

796 *Khajleniya*. This is another term for the Jawara festival and refers especially to the activities of the ninth day, and the part the women play in carrying the wheat stalks. It is therefore spoken of [857] by some Kols as a woman's festival. Along with it there are certain [533] activities for the children. Two sticks are set up to represent a man [535] and a woman, and they dance about the sticks and sing some marriage songs. There is also a test of balance, and a long bamboo pole is [526] placed on the ground, and the boys and girls try to see if they can

1. Frazer, J. G., *The Golden Bough*, Vol. I., p. 236 ff.

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796 825 [574] Kols everywhere observe this festival. On the fourth day of *Sawan* or *Srawan* they should observe a fast which ends with a feast on the fifth day. On the morning of the fifth day Kols worship some symbol of *Nag* and put out saucers of milk near termite hills and other places where snakes have been seen or suspected. No digging or ploughing is done this day lest the snakes be disturbed or injured. Sometimes the women do no grinding or cutting. In the evening there is a big feast of "*puris, sewai, bara,* milk and sugar."

796 [776] *Naodurgan.* Literally, "Nine Durgas." This refers to the *Jawara* festival noted above, and is especially connected with the one observed in the fall. Kols say it is observed in remembrance of the nine *devis.* Durga *devi* is the eldest and eight more accompany her. Hindus usually speak of this as *Naoratri* or Nine Nights.

Phag. This is the same as the *Holi* festival, which we have described.

Pusan. In Rewa it was said that this was held in the month of *Pus* (December-January). This may be a variation of the so called [574] *Khichri* festival, for at this time Kols say they worship no particular *devi,* but have a feast with some friends.

796 789 [168] *Rakhi.* "Protector." The full title of this festival is *Rakhibandhana,* "amulet tying." This ceremony is performed in the month of *Sawan* (July-August). This is probably the most unhealthful season of the year in the villages, a time when malaria is very common, and something must be done to ward off illness. A coloured cord decorated with tinsel is tied to the wrist; husbands should tie one on the wrists of the wife and the wife on the husband, sisters on the wrists of brothers and *vice versa.*

[177 773] This festival is based upon the Hindu legend from the *Bhavishyottara Purana* in which the story is told of the earth, men and gods being under the power and tyranny of the great King Bali, who, by his devotion to Siva, had gained enough merit and power to rule. Before Vishnu became incarnated as the Dwarf Vamana and subsequently conquered him, it was necessary to have some kind of protection from this demon. Vishnu gave Indrani, the wife of Indra, a coloured silken thread which was tied by her about Indra's wrists, and thus he secured protection from Bali.

796 177 *Ramnavami* is the birthday of Rama and comes on the ninth day of the month of *Chaita* (March-April). This coincides with the ninth day of the spring *Jawara* festival, and is the Hinduised term a Kol may use to describe the doings that night. See under *Jawara.*

796 789 184 *Sirwani.* This is another name for the *Rakhi* festival. *Sirwani*

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comes from the word *Srawani*—severing of cords—and occurs in the month of *Srawan* or *Sawan* (July-August). This is really the Brahmanical name for *Rakhi* and refers to the removal of the old sacred thread and the gift of a new one. The festival was named only by the Kols at Kotmi, on the Southern border of Rewa.

Tija. This is often given by Kols and is the more common term for the *Khajeniya* festival noted above. It refers to the women's work on the ninth day and is thus essentially a woman's festival. In some places the words are put together: *Tija-Khajeniya*.

It should be observed that but few of the features in the more popular festivals observed by Kols may be traced directly to Hindu influence of a higher kind. Even where there are parallels, the worship is of a different nature, simpler and much more animistic.

AGRICULTURAL RITES. It will have been noted that some of the Kol festivals, *Jawara*, for example, are connected with agricultural magic. A few illustrations are given concerning the activities of the agricultural Kols at the time of planting, reaping and threshing.

Sowing. The sowing of crops is closely associated with the fall *Jawara* festival which precedes the sowing of the winter wheat, harvested in March and April. The second phase of *Jawara* comes in the spring at the close of the harvest. It was noted that the *Jawara* sowings at *Kunwar* give a forecast of the coming crops. The greater the number of plants the better the price, and the rootlets help one to judge the size of the crop.

At the actual time of ploughing the Kols have few, if any, ceremonies. A *hom* offering to *Dhartimai*—the goddess of earth, or Mother Earth—is made just before the ploughing begins.

During the growing season an earthenware pot, coloured white and dotted with black marks, is set upside down on a pole in the centre of the field. This is chiefly to avert the evil eye and to protect the crops, though some call it *Khetrapal* or *Bhumiya*. Its presence insures fertility.

Reaping. When the time to reap has come, the one who controls the harvest will take some curds with him to the field. From some heads of the still unreaped wheat or rice, a few grains are taken and mixed with the curds. The man then goes about the field scattering a bit of the curds and wheat here and there. This is said to be an act of propitiation as *Bura deo* is probably living in the field in some form or other, possibly as a snake, and some accident may result if he is not propitiated in this manner; it may be a serpent bite, or a cut from the sickle. This propitiation likewise helps to bring a good

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776 entering into it in the form of a dog, a cat or an owl. They may assume almost any form and their bite is very poisonous. They can quickly change their shape and appearance. The female type, called *rakshasi* goes about in the likeness of a beautiful girl and seduces men. Nevertheless, this type of demon is easily fooled and if one is clever and does not lose his nerve he can outwit them.

Kols are also familiar with other kinds of spirits such as the *gayal*, the *pisach* and the *kogi*, but little seems to be known about them. The literature on tribes and castes is rich in spiritism and much might be compiled concerning spirits. The above represents the usual Kol point of view.

776 824 775 THE DWELLING PLACE OF SPIRITS. Kols believe that trees are the most likely place for spirits to dwell. The *banyan* tree seems to be the favourite place for the spirit, although it is said that the *churel* prefers a *nim* tree, particularly if broken or dead. It is claimed that the mango and the *bel* trees are not often inhabited by spirits. The tamarind tree is connected with the *jind*.

776 823 Spirits may also dwell in rocks and certain weird shapes in their appearance are probably due to the activity of some spirit living there.

776 825 764 Animals may become habitations for spirits, and some, like the *rakshasas*, freely enter into them. The graveyard and the burning grounds are sure to have some spirits dwelling near them and Kols avoid such places; or if they must pass by, go two by two. Such places should never be approached at night.

776 342 789 It was noted that spirits enter houses through doors and other openings. Doors are therefore generally surrounded by demon-scarers, and windows are never found. Evil spirits also enter and dwell in human beings, coming in through the mouth, eyes, ears or nose; so these points should be especially protected. They may also run up the legs or the arms and suitable bangles are worn to prevent this.

754 THE EVIL EYE: NAZAR. Men and women may also be possessed of an evil power to injure or distress one another. The evil eye, *nazar*, exerts a powerful and dangerous influence and is often evidenced by a squint or the loss of an eye. The person with an evil eye has an inherent power which may be transmitted through a mere glance, and this power strikes one as surely as a bullet. The very glance of such persons is particularly penetrating and it is not good to have any one gaze at you, for it may be that death is in the look. Children are particularly liable to be affected by the evil eye, and ill health and

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even death are often traced to this influence. A woman is more likely to have an evil eye than a man. Kols believe that Gond women should be avoided as far as possible for many of them are said to have an evil eye that is likely to affect children. A well-dressed person is more likely to be affected than a poorly dressed one, and to put on fine clothes is to attract attention and therefore invite danger.

The evil eye may also be directed against animals and plants; so a bad crop, or the illness or death of an animal, may be due to some one with an evil eye. Pumpkins are often trained to grow upon the roof of Kol houses and may be protected from the evil eye by white-washing an ordinary flat tile, making a cross in the centre with lamp-black, and putting upon the tile as many dots as there are pumpkins growing upon the roof. This will protect them and no pumpkin will rot. A rotted pumpkin is the sure sign of the activity of this mysterious force.

The time of eating is a particularly dangerous one from the point of view of the evil eye. No stranger should come into the presence of one who is taking his meal, and at that time he should turn his back on all people, including even the members of his own household. If one possessed of the evil eye should see the face of a person taking his food it may have a serious result. Therefore it is wise never to interrupt a man at his meals; this a stranger will never do. If accidentally confronted in this way, the eater should stop his meal and wait till the person has passed out of sight. To be seen in the act of putting on new clothes is also to expose oneself to the dangers of the evil eye, should such a person happen by.

WHAT THESE FORCES DO. We have seen something of the supernormal powers which the average Kol feels are all about him. What do these powers bring to pass? Some indication of this has been given already, but more may be stated. Diseases, particularly wasting diseases, are surely due to the presence of evil spirits or the spell of the evil eye. Any mysterious disease may be ascribed to these powers. Ill luck is also due to the attention of the forces named above. A man may be tripped up: it is the work of a spirit; he cuts his hand: a *bhut* directed the axe. We were told of a certain evil spirit dwelling in a banyan tree on the Great Deccan Road near Katni. He was particularly annoyed by cyclists: probably he could not get used to the march of civilization. This spirit was especially active at midday and midnight, and if a cyclist should fail to show respect, by not dismounting and walking by the tree at those particular hours, he was sure to be killed. It was commonly reported

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that several men had already lost their lives, and others had been injured because they failed to show deference. At any time of the day one who passes this place should get off his cycle, stop, ask permission of the spirit to pass by, then walk with his cycle and mount it again a few paces beyond.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES. Various kinds of devices are used by Kols to ward off the power and effectiveness of the evil eye and the spirit world. The protective remedies commonly employed are listed alphabetically.

Abuse. The abusive language and songs generally used at the time of the wedding have a prophylactic value. There is somehow resident in *gali* a power which protects the bride and groom from evil influences.

Ashes are commonly employed both on religious and social occasions. Immediately after birth the new-born babe is dusted with ashes. They are also scattered over the place of birth, lest the spirits get a portion of the afterbirth and use it against the child and the family. A magic circle of ashes is put around the bed of the mother and her new-born child. When the *nara*, the stump of the umbilical cord, falls off, it is buried in the floor of the house, and a fire which is kept burning over the spot constantly supplies fresh ashes.

Ashes are kept in shrines to frighten evil spirits away. A portion thrown into the air from time to time will be effective in doing this. A fleck of ashes in a child's mouth after feeding with milk keep *bhuts*, who are passionately fond of milk, at a safe distance from the child. The ashes from burnt cow dung cakes are especially useful as are the ashes of wood from the *bel* tree.

Bangles are a protection. The glass types are mostly decorative, but their colours are efficacious as certain colours repel demons. Kols believe that metal bangles are the most effective, particularly the copper and iron types. As *bhuts* may enter through the feet or hands, bangles on the wrists and ankles prevent that way of entry.

Beads about the neck of children are particularly defensive against the evil eye. They should be of bright colours and the Kols most often use a type made from lac. Blue beads about the necks of cattle help to protect them from the evil eye and all valuable animals should be so guarded. A unique charm noted in this connection, though not among the Kols, was that of old bicycle chains fastened about the necks of cattle.

Charcoal, because it is a form of ash and black in colour, is a devil-scarer. Mixed with milk and wine and spread in a circle, it

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forms an effective bar to evil spirits who dare not cross that line. Sometimes it is dropped into milk as it is brought home, in order to protect it from the milk-loving *bhuts*.

Colours are also an effective protection. Black is particularly valuable as a prophylactic from the evil eye. Hence lamp-black is put on the face just beneath the child's eye. This disguises and renders him less attractive, and as a result the evil eye will not linger on him. Black marks on a white-washed tile or earthen pot ward off the evil eye in the case of crops. Black also pleases Kali and she is glad to see it.

Red frightens off demons and red flags found above almost every shrine have a dual significance: they please the good spirits and frighten off the evil ones. The *sendur* (vermilion) put on the bride and groom is a protective at that vital time. Following the purification ceremony, six days after the birth of the child, the mother's feet are coloured red.

Yellow also protects and there are anointings with turmeric in oil at the times of birth, wedding and death. At such crises of the soul they keep away forces bent on evil.

White is also used: a white *pot*, or daub, placed on the side of the face, immediately in front of the ears, is said to be protective in the case of the child and wards off the evil eye.

Copper. Iron and copper bangles are common among the Kols and some say that of the two copper is to be preferred and is more effective; it was offered to Hanumanji the monkey god, and is hence very sacred. On no account should this sacred metal be used for dishes nor *lotas*, especially if the *lota* is to be taken out for latrine purposes. To do this would insult Hanumanji and show disrespect to copper. The copper bangle is a very potent charm, and among Kols it is often found that children have a copper anklet on one foot and an iron one on the other. The same applies to the wrists. The little boxes frequently seen attached to strings about the neck, containing powerful protectives such as tiger's claws or *mantras* (written charms), are generally made of copper.

Incense and Smoke. Incense attracts good deities and, conversely, repels evil personalities. At the time of worship incense is thought of as having this dual function. The odour of burning *ghi* is very effectual in this respect. Smoke usually repels demons and if articles which cause an evil odour are dropped into the fire they are driven away. In the Kol birth chamber the baby is passed through smoke soon after birth, and for some days the air in the lying-in room is kept smoky by means of a fire smoldering somewhere within it.

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789 823 *Iron* is, on the whole, probably the most common of protective metals; and while some put copper above iron, nevertheless in the case of the Kols, iron appears to be more widely used than copper. The use of iron takes many forms. A woman should always have a bit of iron about her as she is usually exposed to evil influences more than are the men folk. This may take the form of a bracelet, an anklet, a ring on the finger, or an iron ring about the neck. Again it may be just a piece of the metal tied somewhere in the garments or on a string about the waist. [755] A sick man should always have iron about him to prevent further demonic influences during his period of helplessness. An iron key is a protective and even nails in shoes are useful in this respect. A piece of iron [513] ought to be under the head as one sleeps and iron nails are often driven into the four corners of a wooden cot should the Kol sleep on one. In the case of children iron helps to repel the evil eye. At the wedding [585] time the bridegroom carries iron about with him, and iron is found in the wedding booth.

Iron protects houses from the entry of evil spirits and makes their habitation there impossible. Therefore, when a house is built [342] iron is buried under the floor, particularly near the threshold. Even though unseen by the human eye it will influence the demons and they fear to enter and abide in the house. Perhaps *bhuts* are thought [775] of as still living in the stone age and dreading the new-fangled iron and its power to break the strongest things of which they know.

789 *Lac*, obtained from the gum of the *Khairwar* tree (*Acacia catechu*), and prepared in the form of bangles and beads, averts the evil eye and [314] wards off spirits. This is variously coloured.

Lampblack is widely used for children and protects them from the evil eye. While it disguises them and renders them less attractive, [751] it also has the practical purpose of protecting the eye from the glare of the sun. The lampblack, mixed with oil to make a paste, is placed just below the eyes and often gives the child a weird and unnatural appearance.

789 *Leather* is a very common devil-scarer throughout India and has its uses for the Kols, such as the custom of employing it in connection 237 with the building of houses. For protection, in this instance, an old 291 shoe will generally be found stuck somewhere about the wall which is being built. This is apparent in the picture appearing in connection with building customs.[1] If they can be afforded, leather shoes with nails in them are a double protection, and no Kol goes on a long journey with- [484] out taking a pair of country shoes with him even though he seldom uses them. He will carry them hanging from a stick or in his hands.

1 See plate VIII.

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Lemons and Limes are able to protect one by attracting the attention of the spirit so that he forgets his original evil intentions. So a lime may be carried about one, tied in the loin cloth. A spirit approaches the man, smells the lime and makes for it, and is so taken up with its 'find' that it forgets the man. If this should happen, the lime upon examination will be found to bear evidences of this attack: the juice will be drained away and the lime may even be split. At the time of worship a lime is sometimes cut and thrown as far as possible. Evil spirits hovering about the sacrifice will take after the lime and, fighting over it, will forget what is going on at the shrine. Limes are also pleasing to *devis* and when the *hom* sacrifice is made some lime juice is frequently squeezed into the fire.

Magic Circles. There are many forms of the magic circle and the shape does not always have to be circular. Any circular article like a bangle or a string of beads is a protection. At the time of the *bawa* an iron ring will often be found encircling the fire for the *hom* offering. The tying of the village with a mixture of charcoal, liquor and milk is an example of the use of the magic circle. Such a circle is put about the place of worship if demonic influence is feared. The circle of ashes round the bed of the mother and her new-born babe has been previously mentioned.

Magic Symbols and figures are also efficacious. Such are pictured upon the walls of the lying-in room and on the walls outside the door, and we have given reproductions of them.[1] Sometimes they are tattooed on the body, and the swastika and the *shasti* are the favourites. Symbols marked by the priest on the forehead are useful protective devices.

Mantras. There is also a great power resident in *mantras* or magic spells. Such *mantras* are very potent in driving off evil spirits. At one time *mantras* may have been Vedic texts, but now-a-days the term *mantra* "is extended to all magical forms of words, letters, sounds or any hocuspocus which bring good luck to the happy possessor of them and evil to his enemies, spirits, or casters of the evil eye. These are often inscribed on paper, the ink in which they are written is drunk, or they are kept in metal cases or inscribed on metal or other talismans."[2]

Some *mantras* which may be used against evil spirits and diseases are as follows:

1 See page 62.
2 Crooke, W., *Op. Cit.*, p. 290.

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171 539 789 1. To cast out an evil spirit:

Kali, Kali, maha Kali; Brahma ki beti, dono hatha bajawe thali jaha dekho waha hali; teri shakti meri bhakti. Isi saihat bhut, churel, kabbis, jind, dono ko paharai, na to dhobinke ghat nahawe.

Kali, Kali, great Kali; daughter of Brahma, who with both hands plays upon the brass plate; wherever one looks there she is. Her strength is my devotion. In this way bhut, churel, kabbis, jind, all are caught. If not, let her (Kali) go to the dhobi ghat and take a bath.

171 755 789 539 2. For fevers and the casting out of evil spirits:

Kalobharo ghungarwala, hatha karo, phulo ki mala chauzath jogon sewa men. chala, dekho dekhan. Nazar ka tala, raja praja dhawa tuhi sab ki dristi bands tuhi. Main puja pawa tuhi. Teri kiya sabi kuchha hohi. Sekhi Bharo mantra ki shakti. Phro mantra Ishwara wacha.

Kalo bharo, curly-headed, with garlands in your hands and with sixty-four goddesses at your service: look! Whoever has an evil eye, whether king or subject, control them all with but a glance. By worshipping you I get your spirit. Through me you can do everything. Let us see the power of Bharo charm. I cast a spell in Ishwara's (God's) name.

3. To cure fevers and drowsiness:

Ardha sisi huhu harib per pachhara, mukh more amukhari sisa, rahe sir men to Shivari ki ain.

By making a sound of *huhu* we overcome the spirit; with face turned, head diseased; by Shivari's name we say this.

4. To drive off fever, pain and bodily troubles:

Marhi, Marhi, mai puhari, tajo margut majh dhar. Usi murda ka dhuan, ka akshar dekha ho, bukhara, dard, na achha ho; to meri Mari na kahawe.

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Marhi, Marhi, I call you. Thou who are in the heart of the cemetery. By merely looking at the smoke of that dead body drive out fever, pain and all that is not well; for if they do not depart then she is not my Marhi.

5. To bring a curse upon, or even to kill an enemy:

Chandi ke uppar Chandi awe. Muh phero nao. Khandi chakra uppar chakra dhawe. Nand masi ki hari age ari, na tak, cha tak, pherna sath muh pherayu, tin so sath. Sachhi meri Chandi.

Chandi after Chandi appears: with moving form and circle; wheel after wheel comes. We have waited for this month and the time is exact. Now go here, now go there, make sixty circles with this instrument (may be a knife is in the hand). Yea, three hundred and sixty circles. My Chandi is true.

6. For cure from illness:

Khermai, Khermai, Khermai, main pukharu. Teri dava yadi yeh achhi na kare to no kahawe sachhi meri Khermai. Washa khali na jai to dhobi ghat na hawe.

Khermai, Khermai, Khermai, I call to you. I am at your door. If you do not cure this one then you are not truly my Khermai. No, her words never fail, (but if you do not come) then better go to the dhobi ghat, and take your bath.

Probably no rational interpretation of these *mantras* is possible. The translations are more or less literal and no translation can really give the feeling put into them. They call upon the gods, plead with them, challenge them, threaten them. To tell one to go out and bathe where the *dhobis* wash clothes is an insult: no decent person would do such a thing. If the goddess can be angered she may accomplish the task just to prove that she is not what the speaker insinuates. The goddesses are made in the likeness of unstable and fickle persons and thus partake of human failings. When the *mantra* is properly recited it is thought to have an inherent power to force the deity to do what the one using the *mantra* desires. The above

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171 789 776 examples are current among low caste Hindus and do not represent the more polished type to be found higher up.

Milk. The use of milk has been mentioned in connection with 272 776 the magic circle. The good spirits like it, and certain evil spirits are 782 passionately fond of it. Milk is scattered over the ashes after the 789 funeral pyre has burnt down. Milk propitiates Nag, the serpent god.

Names. Great care should be exercised in the selection and use 651 of names, as they become a part of one's personality. A good name 789 is also attractive to evil spirits, and if the spirits come to know that a certain child has such a name they may make an attack on the innocent thing. Therefore, call the child by an evil name such as 'fly', 'filth', 'one-eyed', and the spirits will not condescend to notice him. [754] Such names protect in another manner as well. If one gets possession of the name of someone—his real name—he may, through the charms of black magic, work harm to the person concerned. Therefore the child's true name should never be known to people lest they should work ill with it. The use of magic on a false name is ineffective and no harm can come to one.

789 *Noises* of various types are demon-scarers for they dislike noise; [825] hence the beating of drums, the occasional fireworks and other devices, by which loud noises are produced when necessary.

Nuts and Seeds of various kinds are useful. Many Kol children 789 have a *ghata* nut (*Ziziphys xylopyrus?*) tied to a string which is hung 824 somewhere about the person, often on the wrist. Mustard seeds are freely sprinkled about if spirits are expected, and, as in the case of limes, distract their attention. They are scattered round the place where a body is burnt. Black *urad* pulse (*Phaseolus radiatus*) is often [585] used on similar occasions. The *supari* nut (*Areca catechu*) is placed below the sacred pole in the marriage booth and under the foundation stone of the house. These are in this manner protected from evil.

Salt has its magic use among the Kols. It has a preservative 789 power, and this, together with its power over demons, accounts for 263 its being scattered over the place where the dead have been cremated. [765] It should not be put into the food during the period of mourning after a death in the home, and the chief mourner should not use it for a year.

755 *Scape Animals.* Among Kols there is a belief that an evil spirit 787 resident in a man may be transferred to an animal and the man thus freed. It is not unusual to bring a man believed to be possessed of 825 a spirit before the shrine together with a chicken or goat, usually the 782 former. The *panda* invokes Khermai amid singing and drumming, or mostly drumming, and there may be a *bara* along with it. Under

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these conditions the evil spirit is sternly addressed and in the name of Khermai is ordered to leave the person affected and enter the chicken. Upon being satisfied that the transaction has actually occurred there are now two or three ways of dealing with the chicken. The most common procedure is to sacrifice it to Khermai, and as the blood is sprinkled at the base of the shrine she is implored to conduct the evil spirit far away so that it may trouble them no more. The less common method is to take the chicken into the jungle, the further away the better, and loose it there, invoking Khermai to let the spirit be in the chicken as long as the latter lives; then when the chicken dies, never to allow the spirit to be able to find its way back to the village. If the chicken should return alive to the village it would mean that the spirit would also re-enter and harm someone.

Supa. The *supa* or winnowing fan is a great protective and has many magical uses. The new-born infant is laid in it and no evil spirit will dare touch him there. It is used in various wave ceremonies, notably during the wedding cycle. It is used to cast out demons and to detect demon possession.

Tattooing has its protective value and in an earlier section this was discussed. It was noted that it protected against disease and aided in the necessary household activities.[1]

Threads, red or black in colour, are useful about the neck. This applies particularly to the child, but the adult often has one somewhere on his person. At *Rakshabandan* time the opposite sexes tie threads on members of the family. Threads are used in connection with the marriage of trees and a thread is wrapped seven times around the marriage pole. Threads are often knotted to afford further protection.

Thorns. Thorns afford great trouble to the spirits. They are put over the bodies of the deceased in the graves and are often put about the houses, where they serve the dual purpose of keeping off both beast and spirit. They are used in magical practices, so that when a jackal crosses the road a pile of thorns should be set up, a stone put in the centre, and with one's foot placed on the stone the jackal should be roundly cursed.

Trees and Plants. Any tree associated with the gods is holy and keeps away evil powers and influences. A *charpai* or cot of *nim* wood is very useful as it protects one when he is helpless in his sleep. Some *nim* (*Melia azadirachta*) should always be placed in the lying-

1. See pp. 29-31.

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789 824 [844] [846] [844] [585] in room and about the door leading to it. Wood from the *bel* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) is useful if burned in the lying-in room and this is done for a period of six days after the child's birth, for this is a critical time from the point of view of evil influences. In Hindu thought *bel* is associated with the god Vishnu. The *tulasi* plant (*Ocymum sanctum*) is helpful in affording a safe delivery and a bit of it is laid over the abdomen of a woman expecting a child. Mango leaves, being lucky and everlasting, are uniformly used in connection with the wedding cycle. Ginger is a devil-scarer, and turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) with its yellow colour is used continually to afford protection. The *magrohan* of the wedding booth should have turmeric put into the hole in which it is placed. The same practice is observed when the umbilical cord is buried or the foundation of a house is laid.

789 776 753 [184] *Tying the Village.* Tying the village and loosing the *devi* is a magic rite which is common among Kols and comes at set seasons. In Barela, for example, this festival is observed in connection with Mari *devi*, the goddess of cholera. It takes two forms and the observance is reported all over the Kol community.

The cholera *devi*, Marimai, must, if possible, be kept imprisoned in her shrine for a portion of the year, particularly during the cholera season. At Barela they say that she must be tied between *Baishaka* (April-May) and *Pus* (December-January). The rest of the year, say for the period of from three to four months, she may roam as she pleases. About the middle of *Pus* a *panda* cuts the cotton cord kept in the shrine. It is this cord that is supposed to imprison her, so when it is cut, she is no longer bound by it. Other *devis* are also considered to be loose at that season. Along in the month of *Baishaka*, the deity is brought back to the shrine by offerings and sacrifices, the magic thread is tied by the same *panda* that released the *devi* previously, and she is now considered bound. This is followed by a feast near the shrine to which only the men may come.

Along with this there is a second form of tying the village and the two are occasionally combined. In this case some water, wine, milk and powdered charcoal are brought to the shrine where a sacrifice is offered and the *devi* implored to let the magic ring about the village prevent the entrance into it of cholera or smallpox. The *panda* then mixes the ingredients mentioned above and the mixture is put into a glass bottle or into a tin with a tiny hole in the bottom. The men then proceed to tie the whole or a part of the village. If the whole is tied it is called *gaonbandh*, and if part, *tolabandh*. They proceed with drumming and singing and a line of the mixture is laid down, either

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from the tin or the bottle, around the whole or part of the village. The *hom* sacrifice should be made by each household, and following the whole procedure, animals may be sacrificed at the village shrine, and a feast enjoyed by all.

TESTS FOR EVIL SPIRITS. It was said by Kols that there are certain obvious evidences of spirit possession. Mental cases are attributed to evil spirits as are cases of paralysis and the like. If one acts irrationally it is taken for granted that he is possessed and efforts should be made to free him.

Sometimes it is not quite so easy to tell whether an evil spirit is really about, or whether he should be blamed for the misfortune under consideration. If a man has a disease which defies treatment, and if he is wasting away, it may be that he has an evil spirit working in him. To determine for certain there are some tests which may be made. Among them are the following:

On the floor of the room, in which the man lies ill, a circle made with wheat flour is marked out, and in the centre of the circle an earthenware lamp is placed. Grains of wheat and *urad* pulse are carefully counted and put in a particular position and sequence. The Baiga or *panda*, as the case may be, then pronounces some *mantras* over them and the room is left to the ill man for the rest of the night. In the morning the grains are counted again and their positions carefully checked, and the ring of flour is examined for any marks or indications of having been disturbed. If there are signs of a disturbance of any kind, or if there are missing grains, it is a sure proof that an evil spirit has been about and has meddled with those articles. Of course, it is difficult to believe that any disturbance could not have taken place with mice and rats everywhere in abundance.

A second method is based upon the use of limes. It will be recalled that spirits are very fond of this kind of fruit and greedily attack them. Several limes are therefore taken, and a large number of sharp needles stuck into each, perhaps as many as twenty-five. These limes are then placed in a position where a spirit, were it to come into the room, would be sure to notice them. In the morning these are again carefully examined, the needles pulled out, or the limes broken and the needles inspected. If there should be a drop of blood on any of the needles the spirit has been there. It would have seen the lime, snatched at it greedily without observing the needles imbedded in it and been pricked by their sharp points. Any formation of rust would be interpreted as blood and be the indication of the presence of a spirit.

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775 776 ●789 MEETING A SPIRIT. Even though properly protected from spiritual forces one is still not immune from their attacks. If one should meet a spirit it is always proper to be very respectful in its presence and to try not to offend it in any way. If the *bhut* is addressed as one would address a gentleman he may behave like one. If one moves further on and the *bhut* insists on following, the person attended may, provided he is properly protected by charms, call out the name of Khermai three or four times in rapid succession. Her very name is so powerful that the evil spirit is helpless and goes away disgusted. But should the person not be properly protected by amulets and the like, he should not call upon Khermai.

If it should be necessary to pass the known dwelling place of a *bhut* or other spirit, the person should first stop and respectfully ask the spirit to let him pass safely. No person should be boastful in the presence of a spirit nor use the name of Khermai except as a last resort. The spirit should be addressed as "Maharaj" if a male, and [576] if a female as "Mata". These respectful forms of address are pleasing to them and they will allow such people to pass without harm.

789 [791] [648] HOW SPIRITS MAY BE CAST OUT. Evil spirits may be cast out only by those who know the secret processes and *mantras* necessary, and such secrets are usually carefully guarded by the initiated. The *panda* is probably familiar with methods although not all of them would admit that they were, and a member of the Baiga tribe is *par excellence* the man. The *bawa* is usually associated with this ceremony.

The *supa* method, forms of which are described below, is the usual method of driving out an evil spirit. Again, the priest while possessed of the *devi* may order the family to perform certain rites, such as feeding the group, sacrificing at the shrine, abstaining from rich foods, and the like; or he may even beat the unfortunate being with his iron lash until the blood flows. This will surely frighten the demon away.

There is another form known to the Kols by the name of *jharna*, [824] 'the sifting or winnowing'. A *supa* (winnowing fan), a *kanssiya* (sickle) and a bit of *Kans* grass (*Saccharium spontaneum*) are made use of in [785] this particular wave ceremony. The person on whom these will be used must have fasted for a period and have had *mantras* pronounced over him, then the above articles are one by one waved over him. The sickle, the grass and the winnowing fan are all symbolical of removing a spirit: the sickle, as it is first waved, symbolizes the cutting down of the spirit, the grass implies the work is done, and in the sifting

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it is like the chaff being driven away and lost. While the *supa* is being waved the Baiga blows, and thus the divine afflatus is communicated to the person. [648]

There is also a magic way of warding off the evil eye and removing its power from one affected by it. A Baiga is called, who, after the usual preparations and offerings, takes a stick and dips it in *til* oil. This is lighted and held over a vessel filled with water, all being performed in the presence of the person suspected of being the victim of the evil eye. If drops of the burning oil fall into the water with a hissing sound the person affected at once begins to feel the influence of the evil eye passing from him. But if the hairs on his body begin to stand up and he begins to feel faint, it is a sure sign that something is wrong and that there is an evil spirit in the case, or that the power of the evil eye requires still stronger measures to remove it. [648]

Kols also believe in, and practise, what may conveniently be called "cross-roads magic". The afflicted person is carried on a bed to the particular cross-roads where the ceremony is to be performed. He is set down in the centre and the friends who brought him make the offerings, which should be sacrificed in the same way as they would be at the village shrine. This may be done at any time of the day or night, but to be really effective it should not be witnessed by any stranger. If some one should approach while the sacrifices are being offered he will be warned away, for if he comes he may break the spell or may himself be affected. It is thought that the disease afflicting the person is loosed at the cross-roads and will attach itself to the first person who passes that way. For this reason Kols usually avoid cross-roads and if possible will pass by some other way. Sometimes a scape animal is released after the offerings are made, and it is believed that he will carry the disease away.

MEDICINES AND MAGIC. Among Kols illness and disease are often ascribed to the work of unfriendly spirits. Cholera and small-pox are particularly the work of the goddesses, and only through them can they be controlled. Other diseases are due to lesser evil spirits. In spite of this, there is also the attitude that in many cases illness is due to the foolishness of man, and that many types of illness can be cured by means of home remedies. Failing these, or any other explanation, the illness is looked upon as indeed the work of a spirit. There are many remedies in use by the Kols for the diseases which abound in India, and the remedies in common use among them are listed below.

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[23] [825]

one's bodyguard. On the whole the dogs of an Indian village are a miserable lot and are a menace to the health of the people.

The tiger is another animal reverenced by Indian peasants and is very prominent in their folk belief, especially in areas where tigers roam. This is also shared by the Kols and as a jungle people they reverence him. A Kol should never take part in a beat to track down a tiger. If one should be met in the forest he should be addressed very respectfully. [789] Certain parts of the tiger are useful as powerful charms. The whiskers, teeth and claws are prophylactics against the evil eye. [262] To eat his flesh, particularly his heart, gives one the disposition of a tiger. To see a dead tiger is bad luck as his spirit may later harm the person observing him. [777] If worshipped as Baghdeo[1] the tiger will not injure any one he meets in the forest nor molest the cattle. There is a story current among the Kols that in the distant past a tiger was born out of a Kol. During the years that followed [773] they lived together peacefully in the forest, but after a time the tiger began to trouble Kols so that a separation was deemed advisable and since that time they have lived apart.[2]

The serpent is both feared and reverenced by Kols. It is usually the cobra which is adored, although Kols treat all serpents with respect. However, it is considered no great sin to slay a cobra, but it must not be done unless the cobra is stubborn and shows fight, particularly when in the house. If a cobra, or any other snake is found in a dwelling house it is addressed respectfully as *maharaj* and asked politely to leave. It may be helped out with a little judicious poking with a stick. If it goes out readily it is helped on its way and if all goes well is not molested further. If, however, the *nag* shows fight and does not appear willing to leave the house or courtyard it may be [782] beaten and killed and its body burned. An offering should be made to its spirit after such an occasion. At the time of the festival of [796] Nagpanchami[3] milk is set out for snakes, a common practice all over Central India.

The horse is an animal with which Rautiya Kols do not have [23] much to do; as a rule they will not touch one, and its dung is ab- [237] solutely taboo. Some of their traditions concerning horses are recorded on previous pages.[4]

The sacrificial animals are the chicken, goat, pig and sheep. [782]

We could not find out much concerning the Kol idea of birds.

1 See pages 141-142.
2 See pages 41-42.
3 See pages 171-172.
4 See pages 34-35; also Chapter X.

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and fearful for at least twelve years. Usually such spirits are not dangerous, and some have said that after twelve years they go to Bhagawan or may be born into the world again.

Sometimes the woman may die in childbirth and the child be born alive. If so, it is thought very likely that the child owes its life to an evil spirit, who desires it for some evil purpose, and hence the child may really be a *bhut*. It is very difficult to get a wet nurse for such children and they usually do not survive very long.

We happened to be in a Kol village a few hours after an earthquake and we asked a group what caused the movement of the earth. Nearly all at once agreed that the earth shook because of *pap*, or sin. One or two though, began to think and said that the real reason was that the earth rested upon the heads of *Nag*—a many-headed serpent, and that once in twelve years he had to shift the earth from one head to another and that produced an earthquake. But when confronted with the obvious fact that an earthquake came oftener than once in twelve years they were puzzled and could not account for it. The latter explanation is the one frequently advanced among Hindus, but Kols were not very familiar with it.

Rain, so intimately connected with the welfare of forest people, may often be brought to pass by magical processes, and there are frequent instances of this among the tribes and castes of Central Provinces. In many of these rites nudity is an essential part, for moved by pity at their representation of poverty, Indra or some rain *devta* will grant refreshing showers. No trace of nudity practices was found among the Kols. The more sophisticated Kol believes that rain is sent only by Indra, the Vedic god of rain, and that it is only through a Brahmin that the gift of rain may be secured.

Some Kols use frogs in an attempt to bring the rains. Frogs and rains are intimately associated in their minds, for in the weeks that precede the coming of the monsoon, the frogs croak long and loudly, and it is thought that their calls bring the showers. So if the monsoon is delayed and there is a drouth, Kol boys will round up all the frogs they can. The larger they are the better for this purpose. A thread is tied round the leg of each frog and they are then dragged about the village. As they pass by houses the people living there come out and sprinkle a bit of water over them. The boys and their frogs finally end up at the village shrine and the latter are tied before the *devi*. It is said that the croaking of the frogs at the shrine will affect the *devi* resident there and she too will long for cooling showers, so she gets to work and uses her influence and power to help bring the rain to pass.

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789 WITCHCRAFT. Magic, it has been seen, is very characteristic of the Kols and religion and magic are inextricably mixed, so that it is hard to say where one begins and the other leaves off. The Kol priest is sometimes learned in magic lore and may know the processes of black magic as well as white magic. Instances of white magic have been scattered throughout this study. And yet it is our belief that Kols are not over familiar with magic and witchcraft. Roy has a statement in his book on the Kharias which I feel is true of the Kols whom we have studied. The quotation follows:

789 171

> As we have said, the methods of magic and witchcraft, practised in Chota-Nagpur and its adjoining territories inhabited by the Kharias, would appear to be generally common among Kharias as well as among their neighbours, both aboriginal and low-class Hindu. In fact, there are good reasons to believe that the methods of magic and witchcraft now practised in common by practitioners of the magic art among Hindu castes and Hinduised tribes of these parts as well as among the comparatively advanced aboriginal tribes such as the Oraons, the Mundas, the Santals, the Hos, and the Kharias, have been in great part derived from one main common source, probably the ancient Dravidian peoples of Mediterranean origin. Not that the pre-Dravidian tribes like the Kharias were altogether strangers to the art. In fact, the magic incantations even among the rudest aboriginal tribes have always been resorted to, and believed to work wonders: the occult powers of certain words, names and numbers, and even of animals and reptiles, and certain herbs, grains and other inanimate objects is dreaded.[1]

754 [648] With Kols witchery and the evil eye go together and a woman is more likely to be a witch than a man. Gond women particularly, it was noted, should be suspected and kept at a distance. The true witch is not such through any power acquired by her, but is rather born a witch from the very beginning; the gift though, may be trained and the art developed. The witch's power frequently depends upon his or her control over the supernormal powers and spirits which are at beck and call and which can be sent out on missions of evil. We did not come across any actual witches. They were said to be found "in another village".

Witches are able to cast spells which reach far beyond the range of normal powers and are able to work havoc against whomsoever they are directed. It was found that these spells could be sent from Jubbulpore "even to Rewa"; that they travelled with great speed like an aeroplane, and that they would reach distant places within an hour or an hour and a half. If the spell should be directed against a particular person in a village it will fall somewhere in or near

1 Roy, S. C., *The Kharias*, p. 410.

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Khambā : the sacred post.
Kalas : The water pot.
Chauhs : The small raised platform under the booth.
Haldī : Turmeric (*Circuma longa*).

7. This is a wedding song from Barela. The headings indicate the time the song is sung.

8. The important guests are teased by being told that they are being fed with food fit only for animals.

9. Another song with a sting. Sung in connection with the arrival of the bridegroom's party. From Salavara.

10, 11. From Barela.

12. A marriage *dādrā* from Barela. The whole is a coarse series of jesting absurdities : the unmarried woman can hardly have a daughter-in-law, and yet the latter is pregnant. It is, however, her sister who is fed the food given to women in confinement, and a woman who is a mere spectator to all this suddenly gives birth to the child which a barren woman takes and suckles.

13. A wedding *dādrā* from Katni. The *kadam* tree is the *Nauclea orientalis*. In wedding imagery the bridegroom is frequently likened to a parrot.

14. A *rāī* from Katni. The spot of vermilion denotes a living husband.

15. A wedding song from Barela in which the bride is teased and warned to be careful. A lakh is 100,000.

16. From Barela. The *barāt* is being teased. Kajli forest is a forest frequented by elephants. A *gutkā* is a magic ball prepared by devotees which, when eaten, is supposed to make one invisible. Here it makes others disappear

V. Songs of Religion.

1. *Dādrās* from the vicinity of Katni. These are examples of numerous songs of this nature which were collected and translated but are not reproduced here. It is likely that most of the songs centering about Rām and his experiences in search of Sītā are borrowed as in their actual worship Rām is seldom taken into account by Kols. Dasarath was the father of Rām.

3. From Sihora : a *rāī*.

4. A *dohārī* from Imalhapur. The *ghumachī* is said to be a fruit of reddish colour with black spots upon it. It is probably the *ghunghachī* (*Abrus Precatorius*.) For *chakhī-chakvā* birds see notes on 1 : 2.

5. This has references to the Rāmāyana story. A *dohārī* from Imalhapur.

6. A song for the *phāg* season, composed in Garha. *Phāg* and *holi* refer to the same season. A *bunda* is a dot or decoration on the forehead to enhance a woman's beauty. Kashi is the holy city of Benares.

7. A *bhajan* called *sumaran*—'song of remembrance'. Hinglās : or Kailās, the holy mount of Siva in the Himalayas. Maihar : a town and state about 100 miles north of Jubbulpore. It is the seat of the main temple dedicated to Shārdā *devī*.

8. A *bhagat* from Jubbulpore. *Lagan* : the wedding horoscope. *Bardī* : the party which comes to the girl's house bringing the groom with